

THE SOCIAL WORK ASPECT OF THE WORK  
OF SETTLEMENTS WITH LABOR GROUPS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Study

Settlements grew out of the serious economic and social conditions which followed the Industrial Revolution in England.<sup>1</sup> Early settlements included individuals who had a desire to aid the laboring class which seemed to have been exploited by the economic situation. The original intent of settlement leadership was to raise the standards of living and to improve the community area in which the laborers lived.<sup>2</sup>

Many services were provided labor. Some of the services were: assistance in finding and improving housing facilities; providing child care and raising health standards. Frequently, settlement workers provided a type of service which would be defined as "impartial leadership" to the early labor movement. This "impartial leadership" included counseling, arbitrating, and providing meeting places.

As the labor movement has become well organized, it has been able to develop independence from many community organizations, including the settlements. Nevertheless, there seemed to remain some real need for inter-relationship between labor unions and settlements.

Many locals of the larger union organizations cannot afford to pay their union leaders; therefore, the officers served on a volunteer basis.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorene M. Pacey, Readings in the Development of Settlement Work (New York, 1950), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Cameron, "Community Organization Function in the Work of Saint Martha's Settlement House" (Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Social Work, Atlanta University, 1950), p. 1.

In most cases these men have very little knowledge about techniques of organization. On the other hand locals that can afford to pay their officers often are without professionally trained personnel to interpret to them their responsibility to the community. These men have been elected from the rank and file; consequently, some display an antagonistic attitude toward management because of previous experiences.<sup>1</sup> Such circumstances as these indicated to the writer the possibility that settlements could play an impartial role in helping the unions to organize projects which would be beneficial to the union leadership and also to the community. If settlements engaged in joint projects with the union which were designed to improve the working conditions of the members of the unions and the neighborhood in which they lived, it is felt that many labor leaders would gain some of the techniques of a social work agency. Such techniques might then be used by the labor leaders in the conduct of union meetings and union discussions.

In order for the early settlements to fulfill their purpose to the neighborhood they felt it their responsibility to offer assistance to struggling labor unions; however, this type of aid has been greatly curtailed in the past twenty-five years. One reason given for this is that many unions have felt that social workers were more identified with the employer class than the laboring class. Other reasons may be found in the general change of settlement programs to include more work with children and youth rather than with adults.

United Neighbors Association of Philadelphia realized that some of

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<sup>1</sup> Richard T. Ely, Hull-House Maps and Papers (New York, 1895), p. 202.

our labor groups today need professional assistance from social workers, and moreover that such labor groups as well as the community would benefit from social workers. Such mutual assistance is desired by many social work groups and agencies throughout the country. In the settlements making its facilities and resources available to union groups, a service is performed both for the community and the union.

United Neighbors Association, a settlement, and local 1291 of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) were both located in a plight section of Philadelphia. This section was often referred to as the waterfront district on the South side.

United Neighbors Association offered its help because the officers of local 1291 were interested in improving the conditions of the Port of Philadelphia, so that there would be more work for the members. This additional work would invariably improve the condition of the community and raise the living standard for the longshoremen living in the area. When there is not sufficient work to provide employment for all the members everyday, many social problems arise.

Professional leadership was not available within the union to build up a general desire among the membership for the improvement of the port; therefore, United Neighbors Association stimulated in a larger group an interest for port improvement. United Neighbors Association would furnish the leadership and the local 1291 would assume the responsibility for the contacting of the proper authorities.

Co-operation with the union also permitted United Neighbors an opportunity to interpret social work methodology and techniques to local 1291. It was the hope of United Neighbors that in a period of time it could withdraw from the project and feel that the union could carry the project alone,

although the settlement's services could always be available when needed.

### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were (1) To ascertain the role which settlements played in the early days of the labor movement, and particularly to discover the type of assistance provided labor unions in their efforts to gain the respect of the employers. (2) This study also was designed to illustrate how United Neighbors Association interpreted social work techniques to Local 1291 International Longshoremen's Association in helping it to organize a port development committee. (3) It was hoped, too, that the finding would show how social work methodology if used by officers of 1291 might help them to become better leaders. (4) And to find out whether or not benefits accrued to the community through co-operation between union membership and a settlement using social work techniques.

### Scope and Limitation

This study was confined to a six-month period of a field work student from the Atlanta University School of Social Work, who performed his field work with United Neighbors Association. The period covered was from September 8, 1953 through February 25, 1954. Historical analysis of the work of settlement extends as far as 1893 when early settlements showed interest in the labor movement.

### Method of Procedure

Material from interviews with union officers was limited because of a time element. United Neighbors Association's record regarding its work with Local 1291 were read. Schedules were used with top officials in the Port of Philadelphia. Documentary material was consulted for the histori-

cal portion. In addition to the above methods the writer had the opportunity to participate in the agency's program as a part of his field work experience.

## CHAPTER II

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE OF SETTLEMENTS WITH LABOR GROUPS

#### History of Settlements and Labor

Evidence has indicated that settlements have represented an attempt to bring about a balance between the principles of democracy and any opposing forces.<sup>1</sup>

Many influences precipitated the awareness and concern on the part of settlements of their responsibility to all groups. One group known as the labor group long has been in the awareness of settlements.

The roots in the beginnings of the social settlement were entangled in the social and political reforms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were also in the complex changes which came too rapidly for easy adjustment by a rigid feudal society, producing tragic consequences to whole sections of the population. Out of these changes and reforms came the settlement.<sup>2</sup>

The early settlements were motivated by a desire to do something about the appalling conditions that accompanied the industrial revolution. Some of the evils that needed correcting were overcrowded housing, poor health conditions, lack of sanitation, and unsatisfactory working conditions. These were pertinent factors that resulted in a poverty level of living for

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold Cameron, "Community Organization Function in the Work of Saint Martha's Settlement House" (Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Social Work, Atlanta University, 1950), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Lorene M. Pacey, Readings in the Development of Settlement Work (New York, 1950), p. 1.



the residents of many neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> In such neighborhoods settlements were established.

Settlement residents felt that one of the best ways to eliminate these evils was to help the laboring class of people organize; therefore, they began to give active assistance to the working classes.

Settlements during the eighties were situated in the heart of exploited populations. This intimate relationship with the residents of the neighborhood showed the settlements that the worst charges against tenement workshops were not overstated.<sup>2</sup>

The first settlement found organized labor almost with its "back to the wall". They were without adequate leadership and places to meet in many cases.

In 1885-90, in the United States, a small group of men and women set out to become acquainted with the controversial issues between labor and management. This move on the part of the American settlement during that time was the beginning of settlement interest in the laborers in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Settlements aid to labor groups, however, can be traced to Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house. Certain residents and associates of Toynbee Hall had been active in the council of dock workers. One Toynbee man unofficially gave assistance in connection with the great dock strike, another Toynbee man wrote a careful account of the strike. There were frequent conferences and discussions at Toynbee Hall at which labor, capitalist and scholars met. They exchanged many experiences about labor and social

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur E. Fink, The Field of Social Work (New York, 1942), p. 401.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Woods, The Settlement Horizon (New York, 1922), p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

conditions with the results that were apparent in the better knowledge and sympathy which they created.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate more vividly how settlements in the United States helped the early labor movement, it has been considered wise to discuss the role of some of the early settlements in their work with labor.

### Hull House

The workers of the settlement came to the neighborhood where Hull House was located on the West Side of Chicago, Illinois, with the general belief that organization for the working people was a necessity. They would doubtlessly have said, 'the discovery of the power to combine efforts was the distinguishing discovery of our time'; or 'we are using this force somewhat awkwardly as men use that which is newly discovered'. In social and political affairs the power to combine often works harm, but it is already operating to such an extent in commercial affairs that the manufacturer who does not combine with others of his branch is in constant danger of failure; that railroad cannot be successfully projected unless the interests of paralleled roads are consulted; and that working people likewise cannot be successful until they, too, learn skillfully to avail themselves of the ability to cooperate.<sup>2</sup>

In 1891 Hull House aided the shirtmakers during a strike brought about by a cut in wages. In 1892 it assisted the cloakmakers to organize. In 1894 Miss Addams urged arbitration in the Pullman strike; and later co-operated with the Civic League in securing the establishment of a state board of arbitration and conciliation. In 1896 Miss Addams called a mass meeting to create sympathy for the strike of the gar-

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Woods, The Neighborhood in Nation Building (Boston, 1923), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Lorene M. Pacey, op. cit., p. 30.

ment workers, and secured the assistance of the Central Congress of the Civic Federation in support of a demand for arbitration.<sup>1</sup>

The Consumers' League was organized by Hull House in 1898 and in 1903 the settlement assisted in the organization of the Woman's Trade Union League.<sup>2</sup>

#### South End House

The resident workers of South End House early established acquaintance with trade leaders; and, the head of the house acted as treasurer of the relief committee of the Central Labor Union in 1893-94. The unions co-operated with the settlement in securing the Dover Street bath house, in organizing several conferences on labor matters, and in arbitrating strikes. The settlement secured a unity of forces among agencies for general social betterment and the trade union in matters before the city government and the state legislature. It rendered valuable service in bringing about the complete change on the part of the labor unions in their attitude toward industrial education. Several studies of women's work were made, and aid was given in organizing several women's unions and the Women's Trade Union League.<sup>3</sup> South End House included in its purpose: "to co-operate with labor organization and other agencies acting for the improvement of social conditions."<sup>4</sup>

#### University Settlement

Trade unions of New York suggested themselves as the best weapons with which to eliminate much of the exploitation that they were experiencing from

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Woods, Handbook of Settlements (New York, 1911), pp. 56-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

some capitalists. Consequently, residents of Neighborhood Guild, which is now known as University Settlement, sought to bring about the organization of new locals by distributing literature in homes, on streets, and at factory doors. New and struggling unions were offered the use of the settlement house. The most important instance of the meaning of such a relation was that of the Central Federated Union of New York, which met for years at University Settlement.

#### Settlements' Concern

The settlement aim originally was to work with people in helping them to learn to live together and to secure good living conditions. To provide these, the settlements furnished professional leadership, equipped with the understanding and knowledge of human needs.

At the time settlements first offered their assistance to labor unions, deplorable conditions prevailed in the community. The area was generally overcrowded, there were poor sanitary conditions, and the citizens often suffered from diphtheria, tuberculosis and other diseases. A large number of tenement houses for workers were located in most of these areas.

It was apparent to the various settlements that to achieve their purposes that they must first help the laboring class to organize for a higher standard of living.

Living condition.--The settlements realized that the people would have to be educated about these evils; therefore they must provide leadership to all organizations that desired to correct these horrible conditions. The settlement sought first to improve the conditions under which the people were living. They petitioned the city officials to pick up the garbage and clear the streets. They sought to have the employer terminate the use

of tenement houses for factories so that the houses could be used for the citizens to live in. This was an attempt to eliminate the poor housing situation.<sup>1</sup>

Health conditions.--Settlements, too, had to interpret to the public and private health agencies the effect the poor conditions have on the community. They had to attempt to get the legislation passed that would prohibit persons from working in conditions detrimental to their health.

Settlements furnished the leadership to the unions so that they could organize and discuss their problems with the employer intelligently.

It was these evils that created such a concern for settlements in the organization of labor unions. They realized that as long as the working man was not organized the capitalist would continue to exploit him. And as long as these conditions prevailed the neighborhood would never be a safe place in which people might live happily.

#### Methods Used in Cooperation

Settlements assisted the labor unions in many ways:

Promotion of social legislation.--The first impulse of the settlement was to organize committees "which would shout this terrible human cost from the house top, and to invoke all available law and to demand further drastic legislation."<sup>2</sup> This was of great help to the labor unions because it gave them an incentive to organize.

Interpretation to the public.--Opportunities were sought to inform the 'well-to-do' and the general public that a certain type of employer was exploiting the sanctuary of the home, and that there was a great need for

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Woods, The Settlement Handbook, op. cit., pp. 113-116.

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Woods, The Settlement Horizon (New York, 1922), p. 170.

laborers to organize if they expected to receive a fair price for this work.<sup>1</sup>

Providing of facilities.—New and struggling unions were offered the use of the settlement houses as meeting places. When quarters were available more established unions used settlements as headquarters. The best example of such a relationship was that of the Central Federated Unions of New York which met for years at University Settlement.<sup>2</sup>

In most cases, settlement intervention showed positive results over a period of time. Some of the results that early settlements achieved are still a very important part of labor and management today.

#### Results of Settlement Aid

Some of the results that were made by the early settlements continue to influence the worker today.

Arbitration.— The active efforts of trade unionists in promoting possible and practical steps in social legislation indicated an important source of power for the industrial upbuilding. The possibility of bringing groups together to unite for the solution of some of the specific difficulties discouraged and rebuffed at times business, professional men and settlements gathered into circles to study and discuss the labor problem and trade unions were requested to represent their side of the discussion.<sup>3</sup>

Settlements were not only responsible for promoting most of the meetings between labor and management, but also played an important part in many

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

labor disputes as the arbitrators.

Better relations.--As a result of the inter-group participation in several cities substantial modifications of opinion and definite impulses in the direction of a better relationship between employer and the wage earner were stimulated.

Influential men of affairs came to understand how working people felt about modern industry and labor leaders saw that there were some business men with whom they could discuss controversial issues.

Higher wages.--Another substantial gain that labor made from these meetings was better wages. Some employers, after becoming aware of the conditions that the poor were forced to live under, were willing to increase the wages of the wage earner, others refused and the unions were forced to call a strike. In instances where the strikes were justified, the settlements usually supported them by making their facilities available to the union.

Unity.--It goes without saying that the two groups were beginning to show signs of unity when they were able to sit down and see the problem together and feel the same towards it. The antagonistic attitude that existed towards the non-laborer was beginning to disappear and the establishing of a personal relationship between workers and agencies was beginning to arise on the labor horizon.

The writer has endeavored to give a historical picture of how settlements helped the labor movement achieve many of its goals, and at the same time carried out its aims and philosophy. It gives an idea as to the method settlements used to aid labor unions during this period. Settlements felt that if they believed in the universality of mankind as one of its philosophies, nowhere else could its influence be more realistic than in the labor

movement.

#### Attitude of Public

The persons who were usually sympathetic towards settlements' assistance to the labor unions consisted mostly of religious and social leaders and, in some cases, a few civic minded citizens. They felt that the rich were growing richer and the poor, poorer and if this exploitation continued, the division between the rich and the poor would be complete. If this were to happen all would surely lose the great and worthy idealism of democracy. Realizing such dangers this group of civic minded citizens aimed to include all men in the current labor movement.<sup>1</sup>

The sentiment towards these men and women who had become interested in the conflicts between labor and management was looked upon by the rich as radical and called forth serious opposition on the part of some people.<sup>2</sup>

The laboring class possessed an antagonistic attitude toward management, and the chief aim of management was to hurt labor unions.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the duty of the settlement became one of changing the attitude of both groups. Settlements believed that permanent success could never be achieved as long as each group cherished its bitterness toward the other.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John McDowell, Social Work Yearbook (New York, 1951), pp. 450-1.

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Woods, The Settlement Handbook, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Richard T. Ely, Hull House Maps and Papers (Boston, 1895), p. 202.



## CHAPTER III

### UNITED NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATIONS' ROLE WITH LOCAL 1291

United Neighbors Association of Philadelphia is a merger of three settlement houses which, previously to 1947, had operated separately. Its philosophy is better living through group thinking, planning and action. Its purpose and objectives are the same as the early settlement houses. In conjunction with the house program, United Neighbors Association operates a field department. The field work department is composed of five professional social workers, whose jobs are to seek the needs of the community and stimulate an interest and awareness of the need for action in the neighborhood.

Local 1291 is one of the ten locals in the International Longshoremen's Association, located in the Port of Philadelphia. This area that is considered the Port of Philadelphia extends from Trenton, New Jersey to Wilmington, Delaware.<sup>1</sup>

The Local had seven paid officers - President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and four business agents often referred to as delegates.

In May of 1952 UNA's field work department received a request from the local for help in organizing a Port Development Committee. UNA, motivated by its desire to help the entire community, brought this request to the attention of the Board of Directors of UNA.

It was UNA's responsibility to interpret to the board that historically settlements had rendered aid to labor unions, and that UNA would only be carrying out the objectives of settlements. Improved port facilities would

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter UNA and ILA will be used to refer to United Neighbors Association and International Longshoremen's Association, and the Local will refer to Local 1291.

improve the appearance of the community, provide more work for the members of the union, and would also make possible a higher standard of living. The Local was organizing this committee for the improvement of the union and the community. If this committee achieved its aim, more work would be available for its members, of which 1000 lived in the area of UNA.

The Board reluctantly gave consent for the field work department to provide leadership for the local in helping it to organize a Port Development Committee. UNA could not place a full time worker to work with the union because it did not have the available staff; however, it was able to assign a worker for a few hours a week and at the same time start the project.

It was not until September 8, 1953 that a full time worker was assigned to work with the union. It was understood by the union that the worker would be a student doing graduate work with the Atlanta School of Social Work. This worker would be available to the Union for a six-month period.

#### General Program Aims and Needs

When the student arrived, he found the following plan of operation had been worked out with the union by United Neighbors:

#### AUTHORITY

1. International Longshoreman Association, Local 1291.

This body is officially conducting the project and has final decisions on all matters.

2. The Executive Board of Local 1291.

This body shall be the administrative arm of the Association. It shall be directly responsible for conducting the project. It shall report to the Association and make all decisions except those which it deems important enough to refer to the Association.

ASSISTANCE

1. United Neighbors Association  
--shall assist the project by:
  - a. Providing the services of John Sennott, Field Worker, approximately 6 hours a week beginning immediately.
  - b. Providing the services of a graduate field work student approximately 30 hours a week, beginning September 14, 1953 and running through February 28, 1954.
2. International Longshoremen's Association, Local 1291.
  - a. Provide office space and equipment and supplies necessary to carry out the project.
  - b. Provide legal services where needed.
  - c. Provide expense account for field workers to cover expenses incurred while working on project as approved by the executive committee.

ORGANIZATION

This project is officially and formally the work of the International Longshoremen's Association, Local 1291.

The Executive Board of Local 1291 shall direct the project.

United Neighbors Association field workers shall operate under the jurisdiction of this board. Their prime duty shall be to serve as resource persons to the Board. The worker from United Neighbors shall also serve as the secretary to the project. He shall have as his duties the keeping of all proceedings, the preparing of reports as ordered by the board.

Under this plan of operation, the United Neighbors will be carrying its philosophy that better living is possible by group thinking, planning and action at the community level.<sup>1</sup>

UNA realized that it would be virtually impossible to continue furnishing a full time worker after February 26, 1954. Hence its objectives were to develop a type of leadership with a broader neighborhood awareness

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<sup>1</sup>Field Department, Case Record, United Neighbors Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

in the Local so that the project could continue with a part time worker.

Democratic leadership.--The first task of the worker was to develop in the community the democratic process in which everyone was given some responsibility for the project. The committee was composed of the eight officers of the Local or the executive committee.

The first thing the worker did was to divide the Port Development Committee into the following five sub-groups: Traffic Committee, Piers Committee, Channel Committee, Public Relations Committee, and the Safety Committee. One officer was given the responsibility for arranging meetings with other organizations.

The chairman of each committee was to be a member of the executive board and as soon as possible the other members were to be drawn from the rank and file. Until these members were selected, the chairman of this respective committee would assume the responsibility for activity pertaining to that committee. Until the rank and file members were chosen, the executive board would represent the personnel of all of the committees. The President of the local would serve as the chairman of the port development project.

It was necessary for the worker to serve as the public relations person until the public relations committee could be formed and given the essential training in public relations.

Public Relations.--The worker was faced with the problem of interpreting to the Local that the public and other organizations did want them to become active in the community. Local members were justified in processing this attitude since the public still had a stereotyped picture of longshoremen. The members of the union explained that the public never said anything good regarding longshoremen. They had been given a great deal of unfavorable

publicity in the past and very little favorable publicity.

One businessman, a member of the field work committee of UNA, said he was under the impression that all longshoremen lived in the waterfront vicinity so that when a ship came into port they are available for work. A staff member of UNA explained to him that the longshoremen have regular hiring times, which is 7:30 each morning; and that approximately fifty per cent of the longshoremen lived with their families quite a distance from the waterfront. He seemed amazed to learn this and felt that perhaps settlements did have a role in labor unions.

It was quite obvious to the worker that settlements did have a responsibility to the labor unions in their area even if this responsibility was not any more than interpreting to the public what the union and its members' role is in the community. Since the union had formed this negative feeling regarding public relations, it was the duty of UNA to interpret to the union that the public relations was a reciprocal thing, and that if members were going to receive good publicity they must be objective in their thinking whether it is to a citizen or to the newspaper.

The port development committee was concerned with helping the community and the members of the Local. UNA explained to them that when the public sees what they are attempting to achieve they will start giving them good publicity.

Three local daily papers wrote articles regarding the port development committee. Some of the officers of the union said, 'this was the first good publicity that any of the papers had given them'. They received a letter from the Bureau of Port Operations requesting that a meeting be arranged between the port development committee of the Local and the Bureau of Port Operations. The program was now beginning to show progress because the union

saw that the public would accept them if they showed their interest in the community.

Community facilities.--Because of the fact that the Local had isolated itself from the community, it did not know of many of the facilities which were available to it in the community. The members could send their families to the settlements for recreation, to other social agencies and to the night school. They knew of evening school but thought that in order to attend they must be working toward a diploma.

#### Knowledge of Community Resources

State organizations.-- The officers of 1291 were familiar with the name Delaware Port Authority but had never really completely understood the operations of it. The Local had never met with the authority to discuss the conditions of the Port of Philadelphia. United Neighbors had to become familiar with the Port Authority's compact, so that effective interpretation could be done in the union. This experience was also very beneficial to the settlement because UNA was beginning to know its neighborhood better, and the organization's responsibility for its conditions.

The port development committee was now cognizant that it was the responsibility of the Port Authority, for the condition of the Port of Philadelphia, and to learn what they were planning in the future for the improvement of the Port, a meeting must be arranged with the Authority.

This meeting would be a beginning in showing the public that the Local 1291 was not only interested in wages but also in the conditions of the Port of Philadelphia.

The member of the executive board who had assumed the responsibility for arranging the meetings, also arranged a meeting with the Port Authority.

Four members of the port development committee were invited to attend this meeting. From this meeting the members of the port development committee were able to learn the Port Authority's plans for the future of the Port of Philadelphia. They were given an opportunity to present their proposals for the improvement of the port. The Port Authority discussed the committee's suggestions with them and explained that certain phases of these suggestions were already under consideration and that they would certainly look into the validity of the remaining proposals. It was very obvious that a positive relationship was developing between the two groups, one which had never been developed before because of public sentiment toward the union.

Local organizations.--The Bureau of Port Operations upon learning of the union's port development committee wrote a letter suggesting a meeting of the two groups should be arranged to discuss the port. This organization is responsible for the city owned piers. A meeting was arranged by 1291 with the Bureau of Port Operations. At this meeting the union learned of the city's plan to renovate the piers as soon as money was appropriated for this purpose. It was hoped to start next year. The union presented its ideas for the improvement of the port. The groups discussed them and both groups hoped that the union's interest in the Port would be of some help in getting the city to make some improvements.

Private organizations.--The port development committee was invited to sit in at the Executive Committee for the Development of the Port of Philadelphia. This committee was comprised of representatives from every organization which had an interest in the Port of Philadelphia, with the exception of the union. At this meeting the union representatives learned that many of the conditions they were trying to get improved in the port were being considered by the port committee. This meeting provided an op-

portunity for the union to build a better relationship with the shippers in the port.

Educational facilities.--As has been indicated previously, many of these officers and men did not have the opportunity to receive a formal education, but their ambition and desire to become leaders have caused them to rise in the ranks of the union.

Many did not realize that they could return to school and take classes such as typing, English and Public Speaking, which may be helpful to any leader. They knew of evening school but were under the impression that they would have to be attempting to get a high school diploma. UNA made them aware of the opportunity of attending evening school without working toward a diploma, by interpreting to them the evening program.

#### Participation in the Wider Community

Community Chest.--The officers and men of the Local knew that UNA was a "red feather" agency but did not really understand the methods by which Community Chest agencies were supported. They were aware that the Chest received donations from citizens but they did not realize the money was given to these agencies to help the agencies provide a service for people who needed assistance. After learning more about the Community Chest, one of the officers volunteered to be a captain in his neighborhood in the Chest drive. He not only interpreted the function of the Community Chest to the members of the union, but also to members of his neighborhood portions of which the Chest had not reached.

Social agencies.--The members of the union have various problems, both social and societal. A large number of them cannot afford professional service. Consequently, they bring their problems to the union officials, who



in many cases are busy or do not know to whom to refer the members. Therefore, the officials feel that it is their job to give some type of advice to the union member. Often this advice was wrong and made matters more difficult for the person seeking assistance. UNA was able to inform the union of the special social agencies available for advice or help.

Community.--If it is the purpose of settlements to improve the neighborhood to do this they must be cognizant of everything going on in the areas to serve them properly. If a labor union is located in the area it is a part of a settlement's objective to serve it if a need exists, and to help provide assistance. Increasingly to solicit union participation in neighborhood projects is becoming a concern of many social work agencies.

Aside from the fact that the financial strength of labor unions is essential to Social Welfare support is that the basic concern of social work is to help all individuals and groups in a community.<sup>1</sup>

Activities of UNA described in this chapter have shown that the needs of the Local were met through cooperative methods.

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer Kestnbaum, "Cooperation of Industry and Social Work", National Conference of Social Work, 1949, pp. 102-108.

## CHAPTER IV

### SETTLEMENTS USE OF SOCIAL WORK TECHNIQUES WITH LABOR GROUPS

#### Opinions of Officials

In a schedule which was sent to the office of local 1291 by the writer of this study in an attempt to learn if they felt that assistance from United Neighbors was beneficial to them. Members expressed the opinions that they had been helped in several ways.

Leadership.--All of the officers felt that United Neighbors had been instrumental in helping them to develop new leadership techniques.

The officers felt that organizing permanent committees for specific projects was an excellent approach to any problem which might cause the union concern.

The president of local 1291 stated the following:

Through advice and instructions from the representative of United Neighbors Association, I have acquired a broader knowledge of how to approach the many problems that I am confronted with as a labor leader.

The officers of the local felt that the meetings they had with other groups help them to develop a much greater awareness of community needs and to know how they could co-operate with these agencies, in projects which would be helpful in meeting these needs. Their knowledge of the port development received from the discussions with other groups, interested in the Port of Philadelphia was invaluable to them. They realized that in order to be a good leader in any community it is essential to be aware of problems which concern ones organization, as well as those of concern to the community.

Some of the officers felt that they had learned a more constructive

approach, regarding leadership, from their association with UNA and if this type of leadership were perfected, it would help them to arouse the interest in the members to attend union meeting regularly.

Community facilities.--In every schedule, each person mentioned some facility that he did not realize was available to him in his neighborhood prior to his association with UNA. Some of the facilities mentioned were Legal Aid Society, evening school, recreation centers, settlement houses and citizens organizations. Most of the men knew where these buildings were located but never attempted to learn their purpose or to whom the use of the facilities was available.

Another officer gave the following answer on the schedule:

Through United Neighbors Association, I learned of the various courses offered to adults at the public high school and various other public facilities that I did not know were available to the public.

Some of the officers and men immediately began to take advantage of the facilities. One officer started evening school with the hope of some day receiving a high school diploma. He said he would have started years ago but he did not know that he could return since he had only completed the fourth grade when he dropped out.

It goes without too much elaboration that the Local took advantage of the use of UNA's offer to help. The president of the Local felt that UNA's facility might be an excellent place for monthly meetings of the waterfront council, since it had had to rent facilities elsewhere and if it used UNA's facilities the money could be donated for the children in the neighborhood.

Improved community.--The questionnaire indicated that the union was beginning to see that the best way to achieve any goals which included more than one organization was to include co-operation among groups in planning.

The financial secretary expressed this in the following words:

The United Neighbors Association has showed how different groups can work together and improve our community and the working and living conditions of the people living in the neighborhood.

As the writer indicated before longshoremen had been stereotyped by the public and had virtually isolated themselves from the community; therefore, any changes that they desired to make in the community they attempted to do it alone. UNA helped them to see that success comes from group planning much faster than individual planning. UNA explained to them that other community organizations were interested in their opinions if they showed sincerity in their approach to the problem. The groups with which they met to discuss the conditions of the port were very hospitable to the union and showed a great respect for their concern.

Settlement-union co-operation.--The Local officials and other top union officials of the Port of Philadelphia felt that settlements could furnish trained people to come and serve in an advisory capacity. Such persons might also explain the problems of the community so that the union could better understand the needs of the community. Together, Union and Settlement, they can attempt to find a solution to the problems besetting communities. The director of the union's welfare pension plan concluded that the benefits which could be derived from settlements and unions working together in the following words:

They could promote the health and safety of the worker, proper recreational facilities for the workers' children, greater formal education for those workers who did not have the benefit of proper schooling.

The President of local 1291 said:

I feel that with labor and social workers working together much can be done to improve the poor housing conditions in many areas, in our community, the main cause of crime among minors.

The schedule indicated quite clearly that the union desired to help with any project which might terminate some of the social problems in the area. From many of the schedules the writer learned that the interviewee was not aware of problems and that settlements, who were aware of them, should make services and leadership available to the union, so that as part of the neighborhood, the union could be active in helping to combat the neighborhood's problems.

The union members have families living in the area and anything which affects the community will naturally affect their families; therefore, it is their responsibility as citizens to organize committees in an attempt to improve the community situation.

The schedule showed the men were anxious to help their neighborhood; but, because of the way in which they had been treated, previously, by the public, felt their help was not needed or wanted. After the union members' association with United Neighbors they were able to realize that no great progress is permanently made unless all groups work for the same goals regardless of their difficulties.

#### Social Work Methods Used

Committee structure.--One of the most accepted social work techniques is the forming of committees within the larger group so that the responsibility will not be on a few members.

The early settlements, when they offered to help the unions, were careful not to let any one labor leader represent the entire union. They would always have the union select a group of men to represent them at the meetings between labor and management. The settlements realized that too many meetings consisted of emotional speeches by leaders, who if they were

in the employer class would do the same thing that the employer was doing.<sup>1</sup> Most of the members would simply "go along" and soon lose enthusiasm. Hence, the settlement wanted every union leader to feel part of the movement, therefore gave as many members as possible a role to play. From his early knowledge, the writer did not believe the settlement in the beginning looked upon committee structure as a social work technique. This study verified that group approaches were used by settlements.

UNA, knowing that a person will be a more enthusiastic worker when he has volunteered and will remain with the project until it is completed, therefore UNA developed a number of small committees of volunteers from the larger group. This helped each man in the group feel that it was his responsibility to see that his committee was continued until the rank and file members were selected.

This method started the project, because now everyone had a responsibility and no one felt that he was being neglected or exploited. Here the union could see and learn the benefits of committee structure.

UNA was interested in getting every man in the Local interested in improving the working condition, and the port of Philadelphia, with the hope that this leadership would be fruitful to them in other union activities.

The early settlements even used the committee structure in getting impartial and interested people to meet with the union representative. UNA always sought to have committees from larger organizations meet with the Port Development Committee so that the Local could see the committee structure in other groups.

Democratic process.--"Democracy is difference of opinion. Even with

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Woods, Hull House Maps and Papers, op. cit., pp. 199-203.

groups which think alike on many issues, and which all believe in the same goals, there are going to be differences of opinions; sometimes a group can be divided into two opposing ideologies, both distrusting each others' plans and suggestions."<sup>1</sup>

This was one of the dangers that the early settlements were faced with because of jealousies that existed in the ranks of the laboring class. The settlement had to continuously interpret to the labor union that "united they stood and divided they fall".<sup>2</sup>

The working out of such difficulties was one of the responsibilities which UNA assumed. It did not feel that the union committees would be any different from any other committees; therefore, UNA was certain that disagreements would arise. It was the responsibility of the worker to help the committees to see the advantage of thinking objectively and attempting to reach a satisfactory compromise; hence, the program would not suffer because one member disagreed with the other or because the committee did not agree with some of the groups with whom it met to discuss the condition of the port.

Research and resources.--The early settlements had as one of their responsibilities the job of finding out the problems existing in the community which could be considered a direct result of the laboring class decision to organize. They were responsible for arranging most of the meetings held by labor and management or any interested group favorable to labor's cause. The settlement worker was usually responsible for the minutes of the

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth D. Benue, Group Dynamics and Social Action (New York, 1950), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-99.

meetings and the records which were kept. Similarly, UNA assumed these responsibilities in the project with the Local. The agency also searched for the facts concerning the conditions of the Port of Philadelphia and attempted to learn who was responsible for the improvement of the condition in question and then reported the finding to the port development committee of the local. The committee evaluated these findings and decided upon the procedure to use to correct the condition. If other groups should be met with before any decision could be made the union made the decision. The committee usually contacted one of the resources that UNA's representative had discovered to talk over the possibility of having a given condition eliminated on the basis that it was detrimental to the Port.

UNA felt that it was its duty "to brief" the committee before each meeting with another group, so that the committee would have what was desirable to discuss, organized in the minds of the members. In every meeting UNA's representative found it necessary to explain to the organization why his agency was working with a labor union.

Public Relation.--It is an acknowledged fact that a worker must inform the public about his activities. It is essential to any project in which success is expected. It is equally as important for the public to know the purpose of seeking its support.

Early settlements were alert in their realism of the significance of public relations. Consequently, they at every opportunity sought to inform the general public, employer, and employee alike. Employers who did not care to provide a better relationship with employees or to pay them enough for their work so that they could afford a decent living standard were publicized. This was then considered the best method for getting public sentiment on the side of organized labor. As long as these conditions were not



known to the public it was considered unlikely to even think of getting them corrected.

UNA was interested in establishing a better rapport between the public and the longshoremen's union. The only way to show the public that the Local was interested in its men and the welfare of the community was to enlighten the public about the community activities in which the union was engaged. It was imperative that the newspapers be informed of the Port Development Committee of the Local. This would let the employer know the union was also interested in the conditions of the port so that business would be better and the men would have more work. UNA encouraged other organizations to meet with the port development committee and to inform the public of these meetings in an attempt to let the general public know of the conditions of the port and why the Local felt it necessary to establish a Port Development Committee. The Local had a set of picture slides made so that they could show them to the citizens of Philadelphia at a loyalty rally promoted by the union.

United Neighbors assistance through social work methodology helped the Local to develop new leadership techniques that would be beneficial to them in the future.

It increased their knowledge about the facilities which were available to them and their families in the community. They learned how as citizens they could help to improve the community, and make it a better place for their families to live.

They felt that there was a definite need for settlements and labor union co-operation so that together both could find new methods of helping the neighborhood.

This chapter illustrated how settlements helped to develop the proper

type of leadership in the early labor movement, and how UNA sought, by the use of social work techniques, to organize Port Development Committee in local 1291 in the Port of Philadelphia.

That community awareness and public relations is important to any organization if they are attempting to correct any social problem in the neighborhood.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study attempts to trace the historical development of settlements and their work with labor groups, and to analyze the role of settlements in the early labor movement. The writer also attempted to describe the methods used and the help given by Philadelphia, Pennsylvania rendered to the Local in an attempt to organize a Port Development Committee.

The information in this study was substantiated by information secured from interviews, agency records, printed material and practical experience as a student worker in local 1291, the Port of Philadelphia.

The following conclusions were made:

1. Settlements help to labor groups began with the establishment of Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house, in an attempt to ameliorate some of the evils that the laboring class was faced with after the industrial revolution.

2. The early settlement houses in the United States were located in the areas where the working class lived, so that they could see for themselves the conditions resulting from exploitation of workers.

3. If settlements had as their purpose to help improve the conditions of the citizens in the neighborhood, then organizing the laboring class was one of the best ways to meet that aim.

4. The settlements played a very active role in the early eighties in helping to organize new locals of labor unions and to advise them on strikes when unions seemed justified.

5. Labor unions, without the help of early settlements, faced a possibility of being destroyed or progressing much slower than they did.

6. Settlements were instrumental in bringing about a better relationship between the labor leaders and the employers, and in many instances developed a personal relationship between some of the union officials and management.

7. Residents of the early settlement houses in the eighties were not professionally trained social workers, but intelligent religious leaders and civic minded citizens who had the vision to see what would happen to our democracy if a division between the employer and worker were permitted to continue.

8. As settlements began to depend upon the public more and more for their financial support, their work with labor groups began to decline and their focus placed on recreation and other community needs since the employer donated the largest amount of money for their support.

9. The labor unions were also beginning to distrust settlements because they felt that the professional workers who were beginning to replace the religious worker had a tendency to identify themselves with the employer class.

10. UNA's help to the Local did not interfere with the policy of the Local nor of management. The help provided Local 1291 had the potential of being beneficial to management as well as to the union. This was true because improved conditions of the Port would mean more work for the citizens of the neighborhood and more business for the shipper.

11. UNA was attempting to show that a good job can only be done in a community when settlement facilities are available to everyone in the neighborhood. The writer felt that this relationship between settlements and labor groups was a reciprocal thing, because unions become of help to the community in various ways, such as (1) Community Chest participation; (2) In-

terpreting settlement objectives to the neighborhood; (3) Providing volunteer leadership.

12. The trend of modern settlements is to employ professionally trained social workers who are interested in finding new methods of helping the neighborhood. The writer felt that if more settlements co-operated with unions, the greater would be the benefits of both community and agency. Since all labor unions cannot afford to hire trained social workers, social work agencies can assist them in the development of leadership and in co-operative planning.

The writer's participation in working with Local 1291 led him to conclude that the benefits occurred had mutual significance to the community, the agency and the union.

## APPENDIX

SCHEDULE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS: SINGLE \_\_\_\_\_ MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_ CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_

Did United Neighbors Association help you to develop new leadership techniques? \_\_\_\_\_ If answer is yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Did your experience with United Neighbors Association help to increase your knowledge about the facilities available to you in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Did United Neighbors Association help to show you as a citizen how you can improve your community by group planning? \_\_\_\_\_ Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other ways that the community can benefit when settlements and labor groups work together. \_\_\_\_\_

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